



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Shepard Building  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

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## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Elliot Krieger, Media Relations – (401) 222-4600 ext. 2182

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### **Three R.I. Public Schools Honored as Blue Ribbon Schools**

CRANSTON – The U.S. Department of Education has named three Rhode Island public schools and one diocesan school as 2003 No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools. The schools honored are:

Arlington School, Cranston  
Barrington Middle School  
Norwood Avenue School, Cranston  
St. Luke School, Barrington

The announcement of the award was made this morning (September 16<sup>th</sup>) by Governor Donald L. Carcieri in a news conference at the Arlington School.

The Blue Ribbon Schools program honors schools that are either “dramatically improving” or “high performing.” Under criteria established by the U.S. Department of Education, Rhode Island was allowed to nominate three public schools for the award.

In January, Peter McWalters, the R.I. Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, submitted his nominations. The Arlington and Norwood Avenue Schools, both elementary schools, qualified as dramatically improving schools. They have increased student test scores over the past three years. In addition, in both schools more than 40 percent of the pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Barrington Middle School, the highest performing middle school in the state on the 2002 state assessments, was nominated as a high-performing school.

All three schools were honored earlier this year as Regents Commended Schools, indicating that they have improved for two years in a row in both English language arts and mathematics.

“I’m delighted that the U.S. Department of Education has recognized the achievements of these three outstanding public schools,” McWalters said. “To win this honor, the students in these schools had to score at the highest levels on our state tests. This award reminds us that all students, regardless of their background, can succeed, with support from teachers, parents, and the broader education community.”

The Blue Ribbon Schools program began in 1982, but it was redesigned last year. This is the first set of awards linked specifically to scores on state assessments. For more information, see <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs>

The St. Luke School applied for and received the award under a different set of criteria that the U.S. Education Department established for private and parochial schools.